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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we praise You that although we have merely a feeble hold on You, You have a mighty grasp on us. Use Your mighty hands to lead our lawmakers to Your desired destination, making them instruments of truth and justice. May the tirades of majorities and minorities be equally impotent to sway our lawmakers from doing what is best for America. May our Senators' daily choice be characterized by ethical congruence as they strive to match their words with deeds.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 today. During that period of time Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The Senate will then recess from 12:30 until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are now entering the second week of a Repub-

lican government shutdown. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is still sitting on the one bill that can reopen the government. Speaker BOEHNER insists the Senate-passed bill to end the shutdown can't pass the House. Well, I am not the first to issue this challenge—it has been issued all weekend and yesterday—and that is, prove it. Bring it up for a vote. If the Speaker really believes the bill will not pass, he shouldn't be worried about bringing it up.

The House, though, if we look at what has happened, has wasted weeks voting—and I have really lost track of the number of times, but I think it is 44 times—the House alone has acted to repeal ObamaCare 44 times. What is the result every time they vote? The same. Truly what Einstein said: The real definition of "insanity" is someone who keeps doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. If, in fact, Einstein is right, then that is insanity, what is going on over there—to vote more than 40 times on the same thing and lose every time. So let's talk about wasting time. Has that been a waste of time? Maybe after 5 or 6 times they should have maybe gotten the message, but how about 44 times? Talk about wasting time.

Could it be that the Speaker is really worried that reasonable Republicans will join Democrats to pass legislation to open the government? Sensible Republicans have grown increasingly fed up with the shutdown, and they are looking for a way out. Just yesterday PETER KING of New York, a Republican, said:

Republicans should not have started this. Closing the government down was the wrong thing to do.

Republican Congressman KING called Speaker BOEHNER's unreasonable strategy to shut down the government unless Democrats agree to defund or end ObamaCare—a law that will help 25 million uninsured Americans gain access to affordable care—doomed to failure. That is what PETER KING said.

Again quoting Congressman KING:

If we want to defund something, we should repeal it, and do it the same way the President got it signed—elect Republicans to both Houses of Congress, repeal it, and have a Republican President sign it.

Mr. President, it is pretty obvious what is going on. I have known it all the time. We have all known it all the time. When I say "all the time," at least in these last many months. But it was made very clear to the world on Sunday in a front-page story in the New York Times. They worked a while on that story, but basically what the story said is that very rich people in America who don't believe in government have used ObamaCare as a conduit to shut down the government. That is what they wanted to do. That is what they have done, with huge amounts of money. We know this has been led by, according to the news article, a former Attorney General of the United States, Ed Meese, and the Koch brothers, who have been raising and spending hundreds of millions of dollars to get us where we are right now.

But what PETER KING suggested is that we follow the democratic process. That has been turned on its head. I know Republicans don't like ObamaCare, but the Affordable Care Act has been the law of the land for 4 years, been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States, and millions of Americans—multimillions of Americans—are already benefiting from this law.

There are rumors floating around. One of my rich friends from Nevada called me on Friday. He said: HARRY, I am down here in southern California getting a little cosmetic surgery. My anesthesiologist told me one of his friends, who is a general surgeon, took somebody's gallbladder out. Do you know how much money he got back for that?

I don't know if it was a he or a she.

I said: No, I don't know.

He said: Fifty-eight dollars. That is what ObamaCare is all about.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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